



## Intel No. 1 for helping workers with commutes

By Traci Watson  
USA TODAY

**T**he federal government releases a list Wednesday lauding Fortune 500 companies that make a major effort to ease commutes for their employees, which helps ease traffic congestion and air pollution.

The EPA rated the companies by how many employees are offered incentives not to drive alone to work. Eligible incentives included the chance to work from home and financial subsidies for public transit. Companies also had to make sure employees had a ride home in an emergency.

Intel makes benefits available to nearly 90% of its 48,000-person U.S. workforce.

A place on the list gives companies bragging rights and a chance to use the program's logo for recruiting. Some companies use the slogan in help-wanted ads, and some have seen a decline in staff turnover.

Many of the companies on the list have long offered generous benefits to make commuting easier. Others, such as Wyeth, beefed up their commuting benefits when the EPA announced the program in the spring.

But workers who carpool or take a bus to work are rare. More than 75% of U.S. workers get to work by driving alone, compared with 64% in 1980. Average delays per driver in the 85 biggest U.S. cities have risen to 46 hours a year in 2002 from 16 hours in 1982, according to the Texas Transportation Institute.

The EPA calculates that the benefits offered by the companies on the list save 450 million miles of driving a year. The companies' programs also prevent the release of 186,000 tons of the main gas linked to global warming, which is equivalent to emissions from about 41,000 cars a year.

Transportation experts say the program will help change workers' attitudes about how to get to work. But the EPA has tried similar programs in the past without reversing the rising percentage of Americans who drive to work alone.

"People just go for the flexibility of the auto," says Michael Demetsky of the University of Virginia, who thinks the program's effect will be "marginal."

But the effectiveness of the EPA program doesn't matter to some workers who get the kind of benefits the EPA is encouraging.

John Myers, an engineer at Intel, calculates that he saves \$2,000 in gasoline a year and more than 14,000 miles on his pickup by carpooling several times a week to his office, which is more than 70 miles from his home. He also gets an extra 200 hours of sleep a year by napping when he's not the carpool driver.

Plus, he says, he's "a lot less cranky" when he gets home to his wife. "That," he says, "saves me countless dollars on flowers."

Best workplaces for commuters		
1. Intel	Computers	Santa Clara, Calif.
2. Fannie Mae	Real estate	Washington
3. Cisco	Communications	San Jose
4. USAA	Financial	San Antonio
5. Sun Microsystems	Computers	Broomfield, Colo.
6. Oracle	Computer software	Redwood City, Calif.
7. Advanced Micro Devices	Electronics	Austin
8. Texas Instruments	Semiconductors	Dallas
9. Safeco	Insurance	Seattle
10. EMC	Data storage	Hopkinton, Mass.
Source: Environmental Protection Agency		
* See the list of all 69 companies at <a href="http://money.usatoday.com">money.usatoday.com</a>		

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